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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000589

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ELECTING A PRESIDENT ONLY POSSIBLE
THROUGH COALITION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT
ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: With 98.3 percent of the vote counted, it is already clear that Moldova will have a five-party parliament. With 48 seats reported thus far out of a total of 101, the Party of Communists (PCRM) will be unable to elect a President, or even a Speaker, on its own. It is still possible that the final result may turn out to be only 47 seats for the Communists, once the overseas voting is tallied. Barring a move to call for a referendum on direct popular election of the president, installing a president will require a coalition. The two possible outcomes would be either a coalition of one or more parties with PCRM or a destabilizing effort by opposition leadership to band together and boycott working with the communists. The four other parties elected to the parliament include the three that were in the previous parliament -- Filat's PLDM (17), Ghimpu's PL (15), Urechean's AMN (8) --Q plus the Democratic Party now headed by Lupu with 13 seats. Their combined total would be too slim to elect a president, resulting in a stalemate that would spark new parliamentary polls in spring ¶2010. Marian Lupu is the kingmaker Q and a possible future President. Any scenario involving PCRM cooperation with the opposition would require both sides to set aside the vituperation of the campaign period and the mutual accusations following the April 7 riots. End Summary.

The Preliminary Results are In

¶2. (SBU) Moldovan law requires simple majority of 52 parliamentary votes (one-half plus one) in order to elect a speaker or approve the President's nomination of a Prime Minister, but a wider three-fifths majority of 61 votes is needed to elect a President. As of July 30, preliminary results based upon counting of 98.3 percent of the votes are known; final results of the popular vote and distribution of seats will be released July

¶31. The prospective seat allocation for parliament breaks down as follows:

PCRM 48 (60 in the April 5 Parliament)
AMN 8 (11)
PL 15 (15)
PLDM 17 (15)
PD-Lupu 13 (0)

¶3. (SBU) Unlike the April 5 elections, in which

the Communists held enough seats to elect a speaker and a president, in the new parliament, the Communists alone will not be able to elect either. The election results would allow the four non-Communist parties to choose a speaker, if they worked together, but not to elect a president. If two attempts by the new parliament to elect a President were to fail, new elections would be required. However, since Parliament cannot be dissolved twice in a 12-month period, such new polls could not take place until the spring of 2010.

Coalition with the Communists...

14. (SBU) The PCRM, in a coalition together with any of the three largest opposition parties, could elect both a speaker and a president. The PCRM's 48 seats plus Lupu's 13 add up to exactly 61, so if Lupu were to agree to work with PCRM, together they could elect a Speaker and have the "golden vote" necessary to elect a President. However, this might still change, as there is a possibility that the PCRM will have only 47 seats, once the remaining overseas votes are counted, which would leave the PCRM plus Lupu one seat short of the golden vote. Lupu has talked about not making a bilateral coalition so, he might try to win support from PLDM and AMN for a broader reconciliation coalition, (and might win such support if he were the one nominated for President). The broader coalition would be necessary should the PCRM have only 47 seats.

CHISINAU 00000589 002 OF 002

President Voronin has already begun to make public statements about a broad coalition. However, we doubt that the PL would be willing to join such a coalition with the Communists.

Coalition Without the Communists...

15. (SBU) Alternatively, all of the non-Communist parties might try to band together. The three opposition parties who made it into Parliament in April were PLDM (17), PL (15) and AMN (8), for a total for 40 seats. If those 40 votes were joined together with Lupu's 13, that would give 53. So, if all non-Communist parties were to form an alliance to work together without the PCRM, with 53 votes they could elect a Speaker but not a President. Such a coalition would then limp along with Voronin continuing as Acting President, with the government only able to last until repeat elections took place in 2010. It would be a formula for protracted crisis, as such a government, while theoretically possible, would be weak and contentious, vulnerable to inter-party power struggles and spats, and would be lacking a head.

...Or an Attempt to Change the System

16. (SBU) Another possibility is that the opposition parties might work together, using their majority, to vote to hold a referendum on reintroducing direct popular election of the President. This decision to call for a referendum would require only a simple majority. If the population were to approve such a change, Lupu could be a strong candidate for popular presidential election.

Comment: No protests anticipated

¶7. (SBU) We do not anticipate any violent protests. Opposition parties have reason to be pleased with their results. The July 29 elections changed the non-PCRM parties from a 41-member combined minority to a 53-member majority. AMN, which was at risk of not passing the electoral threshold, can breathe a sigh of relief, while both PL and PLDM stayed close to their April results. PD, which has never before passed the threshold running independent of a bloc, should be satisfied with the lift provided by its new star player, Marian Lupu. Absent a reason to protest, such demonstrations are less likely. We hope that the energies spent on squabbling after the April elections will now be devoted to difficult work of horse-trading and reconciliation needed to provide a viable government. The party leaders would do best to engage in constructive dialogue and move forward to put together a government capable of implementing the electoral will of the people.

CHAUDRY